

**Procedure
for
Language Proficiency Testing and Interpreter Training of Spanish Interpreters
(Non-DHEC Staff)**

Coordinator: Terry Peacock in the Office of Minority Health will serve as the coordinator and contact person for this initiative. She can be reached by calling 803-898-3328.

Purpose: To select and register candidates for Spanish/English interpreter/translator testing and training. These are individuals who will be used by the agency to provide Spanish interpreting services or sight translations or who will be working in a bilingual capacity for the agency as a volunteer or under contract. Once testing and training is successfully completed they will have met the requirements for being qualified interpreters for the agency.

Definitions

Candidate: An individual who will be called upon to provide interpretation/sight translation services routinely and has agreed to serve as an interpreter for the agency either as a volunteer or contractually.

Interpreter: An individual who serves as a third party conveying verbal communication between a Spanish speaking person and non-Spanish speaking staff person.

Sight interpretation: The ability to read materials or documents written in one language while presenting that written material orally or in writing in another language. (Example: Customer presents a document, such as an immunization record, health history, notice, etc., in Spanish and interpreter reads the material and they interpret it orally to a staff member). At times it also may be necessary for the interpreter to be able to write instructions or information in one or the other language (Spanish or English). Example: Write the appointment, information or directions in Spanish or write/document something in English that the customer has provided to them in Spanish.

Bilingual Worker: A person who has mastered both English and Spanish and can conduct his/her work in either language. A third party would not be present since both the staff person and the customer speak the same language.

Customer: Any person who is a potential, prospective, or actual applicant for or recipient of services from the agency.

Individuals who are being used in the role of interpreter, volunteer or contractual, can continue to be used **until** the opportunity is available for them to be tested and trained. An individual who wishes to provide interpreting for DHEC clients will be expected to register for the next available testing. Once that opportunity has been made available, only those tested and determined qualified **can be used as interpreters and/or translators.**

Steps

Apply: Provide to the Office of Minority Health, via phone or e-mail the applicants name, mailing address and daytime phone number. A profile sheet will be sent to them from USC, Interpreter Qualification Program. The profile has to be filled out and mail, faxed or e-mailed per the instructions on the form. Once that is received, the candidate will go into a database for notification of the next testing and training dates and times.

Register: When you receive the notice of testing dates you will also receive a registration form. Once candidates register and commit to attending the testing and/or training it will be imperative that they attend (emergency situations will be handled on an individual basis). The agency is covering the cost (\$150-\$450 per person) for the testing and the training, therefore all slots need to be filled.

Sessions: Testing

Language Proficiency testing session will be three (3) hours long. Class size will be limited to fifteen to twenty persons per session. Only those who pass the language proficiency testing will accepted for the training. Those who do not pass may be sponsored a second time with assure that the candidate has taken steps to improve their language proficiency.

Training

Training will be four (4) days. All four days will have to be completed before the candidate will be evaluated and considered for being qualified as an interpreter and/or a bilingual worker and/or small text translator. On the fourth day testing and skill evaluation will determine the level of skills at which each candidate can function. There will be some, but limited, flexibility for make-up days. This will be determined on individual basis when adequate notification is given to the Coordinator. Notice of testing and training will be sent to each applicant at least four (4) weeks before testing and/or training with a form, that must be returned in order to be considered register for either the testing or training.